

## Value addition a must - Ngwenya

COMESA Secretary General Mr. Sindiso Ngwenya, on 28 April 2010, reiterated the need for COMESA Member States to enhance value-addition to products in order to become competitive under the Customs Union.

Mr. Ngwenya was addressing a media breakfast at a Lusaka Hotel. He said Member States such as Zambia, whose stronghold is copper, need to add value to achieve the full potential from mineral resources and remain competitive.

"We live in a global village where it is so competitive and as such Member States have to start adding value to products to remain competitive: he said.

Mr. Ngwenya dismissed the allegations by some quarters that Zambia does not benefit from intra-regional trade, citing trade between Egypt and Zambia as an example.

Contrary to an earlier belief that COMESA Free Trade Area (FTA) launched in the year 2000 would



*COMESA SG Mr. Sindiso Ngwenya*

benefit mainly "giant economies," Mr Ngwenya pointed out that trade between Zambia and Egypt under the COMESA FTA has been in favour of Zambia, which has exported goods worth USD600 million compared to imports of only USD100 million.

Mr. Ngwenya said although COMESA's Customs Union was in a transition process where countries have to agree to align their existing

tariffs, it has made positive strides in regional integration from FTA to Customs Union.

Mr. Ngwenya further pointed out that the COMESA FTA was unique in that it is totally Quota Free –Duty Free, noting that most FTAs still maintain some kind of protectionism. Within the COMESA FTA the region has been able to move from a USD3.2 bn in 2000 to USD15 bn in 2008.

He, however, said figures for 2009 might not be impressive because of the global economic crisis experienced last year. COMESA targeted intra-regional trade to be around USD25 billion.

Mr. Ngwenya said COMESA is on course in implementing the Customs Union, and once Member Countries agree on how revenue can be collected at the Port of Entry, technically, there will be no need for rules of origin.

## Simplified Trade Regime to be Launched at the Malawi-Zambia Border

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) bloc, in collaboration with the Governments of Malawi and Zambia, will be launching the Simplified Trade Regime (STR) at the border of Zambia and Malawi, known as the Mwami Border Post, on 30 April 2010.

The COMESA Simplified Trade Regime is one of the important programmes to facilitate trade and reduce poverty. It recognises that cross-border trading is an important source of employment in this era of high unemployment and is an income generating activity that sustains families.

Cross-border trade has proved to be a very important activity in ensuring supply and access to basic needs by the border communities. Cross-border trade aides in overcoming the obvious hurdles of larger commercial trading, by reaching out to remote communities with food stuffs, groceries, equipment and many other items in smaller quantities thereby contributing to food security and economic well-being.

The Simplified Trade Regime is applied to consignments valued at USD500 or less. It has three components.

- Firstly: a simplified certificate

of origin, which is documentary evidence for originating goods from member country;

- Secondly: a simplified customs document, which will support data capture and statistics for government policy review, formulation and management; and
- Thirdly: a common list of products to be traded between two countries under this regime.



## *The COMESA Court of Justice*

The Eighth Administrative meeting of the COMESA Court of Justice opened in Lusaka on 26 April 2010 to mainly review activities of the Court, both judicial and administrative, so as to strengthen the Court in general and the activities of the registry in particular.

Honourable Nzamba Kitonga, the President of the COMESA Court of Justice opened the meeting stating that the Court is at the centre of integration in the region and as integration deepens, the role of the Court, which is to ensure a rule-based common market, becomes more pronounced. He added that the role of the COMESA Court of Justice becomes clearer in perspective as the development of the common market becomes clearer.

“There are different laws and regulations that are being passed

by the Policy Organs, which the Court will be required to apply in the near future. It will be the role of the Court, in complementing the work of the Competition Commission, to see to it that there is a level playing field for actors in the economic market,” Justice Kitonga said.

The COMESA Court of Justice is working on a 2001-2015 Medium Strategic Plan which is expected to position the Court to respond appropriately to the challenges and opportunities that exist in regional integration. “It will steer the Court through a time of great upheavals in the integration roadmap. The wheels of the integration process have been set rolling with the launching of the Customs Union process in June 2009,” Justice Kitonga added.

The President of the Court

pointed out key achievements such as the consolidation of the internal market in COMESA, the operationalisation of the Customs Union by 2012, the launch of the Common Market by 2014 and eventual establishment of the monetary union in 2018 will generate new issues for consideration by the Court. The COMESA Court therefore, needs to competently support the process by getting acquainted with the new laws.

In welcoming the Judges, Acting Secretary General Ambassador Nagla El Hussainy assured them of continued support from the COMESA Secretariat to ensure that operations of the Court run smoothly.

The ceremonial session of the COMESA Court of Justice opens in Lusaka at the COMESA Secretariat on Monday 3 May 2010.



# COMESA among hundreds of exhibitors at ZIFT

The COMESA Secretariat was this year among the exhibitors at the 51st Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZIFT) that took place last week in Bulawayo city, Zimbabwe. The trade fair attracted over 820 exhibitors, up from 713 that participated last year.

The exhibition which was officially opened by the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, attracted foreign exhibitors from 12 countries namely United Kingdom, Iran, Indonesia, South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Botswana, Swaziland, and Ghana. The opening ceremony was also addressed by His Excellency Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe and Chairman of the COMESA Authority.

Speaking to the media on 22 April, 2010, at the ZIFT show ground,



*A show gower seeks information at the COMESA Stand*

the Chairman the ZIFT board Mr Bekithemba Nkomo revealed that “in terms of space available, 98% was sold” and that “in total we (ZIFT) had 820 exhibitors compared to 713 last year. Of the 820 exhibitors, 667 were local and the other 153 were foreign”

Zimbabwe Trade Minister Prof Welshman Ncube also described the 51st ZIFT as resounding success, pointing out that the fact that 98% space was sold can be referred to as full capacity.

## Upcoming Events

- 3-4 May 2010 - Stakeholders Workshop On The Customs Union - Harare, Zimbabwe.
- 3 - 4 May, 2010 COMESA Technical Committee Meeting on Gender - Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe
- 5-7 May 2010 - Meeting of The Directors of Customs – Harare, Zimbabwe
- 6 - 7 May, 2010, Fourth Meeting • Ministers responsible for Gender and Women's Affairs. Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe
- 10 May 2010 - GISAMA meeting
- 10-13 May 2010 - Third ACTESA • Stakeholders meeting at Pamodzi Hotel, Lusaka, Zambia
- 10-13 May 2010 - Second Meeting of The Committee on The Customs Union - Harare, Zimbabwe.

## COMESA Gender Ministers to Meet in Zimbabwe

Ministers responsible for Gender and Women's Affairs from the COMESA region will meet in the tourist resort town of Victoria Falls in the Republic of Zimbabwe on 6th and 7th May 2010.

A presentation of the following reports will be made to the Ministers: The draft framework of the COMESA Gender mainstreaming Toolkit: Framework for the HIV/AIDS Multi-sectoral programme: Concept paper on the social charter, recommendations of the special session on women entrepreneurs: and the Ministerial mission to Chirundu border. The MoU between COMESA and the International Labour Organisation

and the FEMCOM Strategic Action Plan will also be discussed.

Prior to the Ministerial meeting, the sixth COMESA Technical meeting on Gender will be held on 3rd to 4th May 2010 at the same venue.